Self-development
Antalikova, Radka; Hansen, Tia Gitte Bondesen; de la Mata Benitez, Manuel; Santamaria, Andres

Publication date:
2011

Document Version
Accepted manuscript, peer reviewed version

Link to publication from Aalborg University

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

? Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research. ? You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Self-development: A trajectory from family over school to friends?

Radka Antalíková1, Tia Hansen2, Manuel de la Mata2 & André Santamaria2

1 Department of Communication & Psychology, Aalborg University, Denmark
2 Department of Psychology, University of Sevilla, Spain

Introduction

• From a cultural-historical point of view, school is a fundamental setting for appropriation of cultural tools and these transform the way the subject perceives the world (Vygotsky, 1986).

• A considerable volume of research has shown the relationship between formal education and processes of memory, categorization, reasoning and problem solving (e.g., Luria, 1976).

• Formal education may similarly change the notion of self, e.g., away from defining oneself contextually in terms of one’s group of origin (ibid.) and towards the ideas of the independent citizen that is promoted by Modernity (Olsen, 1994), but more research is needed in this area.

• To investigate this, the Sevilla Laboratory of Human Activity integrates research on self from cross-cultural psychology (e.g., Markus & Kitayama, 1991), autobiographical memory (e.g., Wang & Conway, 2004) and narrative (e.g., Smolari, 2004).

• For example, de la Mata et al. (in press) compared Mexican groups with different levels of formal education and found more indications of relatedness in the self-memories of participants with little education, whereas participants with more education were more prone to recall themselves in ways associated with an independent notion of self.

• The present study adds a within-subject analysis (Antalíková, Gulbrandsen, Hansen, de la Mata Bemić, & Santamaria, in press) to support the assumption that it is indeed education that enhances independent notions of self and not vice versa. For context, models of self from cross-cultural psychology and autobiographical memory are summarized before the results.

Hypotheses and suggested model

Based on the mutual interrelatedness of autobiographical memory and self-construal, and the assumption of school promoting an independent self, we asked adolescents to recall meaningful memories about their family, school and friendship, expecting the following:

1. Looking at independence and relatedness of self, school memories will display the highest autonomy, while family and friendship memories will point to higher independence;

2. Looking at the time perspective of adolescent self-development, family memories will be recalled from the earliest age followed by school and friendship memories, mirroring our participants’ developmental trajectory.

Results

• Participants: 22 Norwegian (M = 17.95), 40 Slovak (M = 18.2) and 52 Danish adolescents (M = 18.96), balanced for gender.

• Method: questionnaire, participants’ age, gender, time at which the event occurred (self-reported) and self-other ratio (number of references to other people divided by number of references to oneself) (Wang & Conway, 2004).

• Variables: participants’ age at the time of recalled events (self-reported); other-self ratio.

Discussion

• Both of our hypotheses were supported:

1. Participants did recall family memories from the earliest age, followed by school and friendship memories, following a developmental trajectory where the three settings shift in importance; and

2. In school memories, participants did refer more to themselves than to other people, as opposed to family and friendship memories, indicating that when thinking and talking about school, they were thinking more independently of themselves than in the other social settings.

• This suggests that formal education can change the notion of one’s self towards higher independence, but also that the setting of school (and the remembering thereof) activates this independence within one’s self accordingly, which is displayed in one’s autobiographical memories.

• Self-construal describes the culturally shaped view on self, including the degree of inclusion of other people in one’s self (Markus & Kitayama, 1995).

• For example, one can view oneself either independent from others or rather strongly related to others.

• Autobiographical memory encompasses memories of significant personal experiences from an individual’s life (Wang & Conway, 2004).

• Autobiographical memory and self-construal are considered to be mutually interrelated – self mediates possibly meaningful autobiographical memories, which in turn reinforces the integrity and continuity of self.

• Numerous studies have shown that individuals with different self-construals (e.g., focusing more on oneself or more on other people) describe the culturally meaningful memories of their meaningful memories (Antalíková et al., in press).

• Looking at the time perspective of adolescent self-development, family memories will be recalled from the earliest age followed by school and friendship memories, mirroring our participants’ developmental trajectory.

• Figure 1: Two types of self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1995).

• Figure 2: Interactive relationship between autobiographical memory and self-construal (Wang, 2001).

• Figure 3: Settings’ contributions to self-construal. The developmental trajectory of settings’ shifting dominance in adolescents’ life, as reflected in the recency and relatedness of their meaningful memories (Antalíková et al., in press).

• Figure 4: Age at the time of event (in years).

• Figure 5: Other-self ratio.

References


